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# OLYMPIA

## AS IT WAS AND AS IT IS.

(Continued from page 159.)

### THE TEMPLE OF ZEUS.

(Conclusion.)

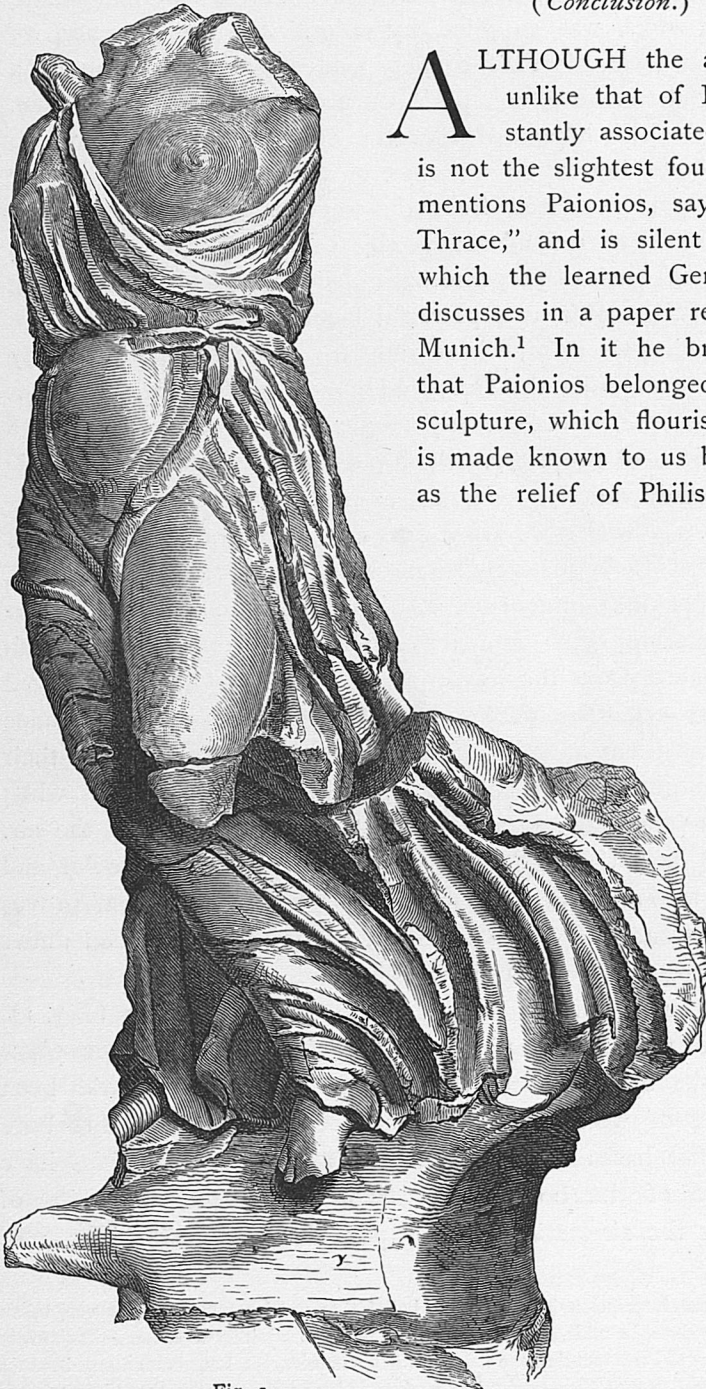


Fig. 1.

ALTHOUGH the art of Pheidias is thus in every respect unlike that of Paionios, the two artists have been constantly associated as master and scholar. For this there is not the slightest foundation. Pausanias, the only author who mentions Paionios, says that "he was a native of Mende in Thrace," and is silent about his artistic parentage, a question which the learned German archæologist, Dr. Heinrich Brunn, discusses in a paper read before the Academy of Sciences at Munich.<sup>1</sup> In it he brings forward many arguments to prove that Paionios belonged to a hitherto unrecognized school of sculpture, which flourished in the north of Greece, whose style is made known to us by many coins, and some sculptures, such as the relief of Philis from Thasos, and the grave-slab of a

warrior from Thessalonika, which, though not from Mende itself, are from neighboring provinces. They show the same "pictorial weakness" (*Weichlichkeit*), the same "absence of plastic development" (*Durchbildung*) and want of deep understanding of the inner organism," as the marbles of the eastern pediment at Olympia; and these faults in common are naturally and simply to be accounted for by supposing that they have a common origin. So far, then, as the understanding of the artistic character "of the pediment statues is concerned, it is not," says Dr. Brunn, "necessary for us to go beyond the home of Paionios in search of foreign influences, no traces of which are to be found in his works." All have the same character, because their excellences and defects spring from the same

<sup>1</sup> *Sitzungsberichte*, 1877, Heft 1.

source.<sup>1</sup> Accepting the conclusions of one who is certainly one of the most competent judges of ancient sculpture in Europe, we may look upon the marbles of the eastern gable as the work of a sculptor bred in a school more pictorial than plastic; — a school which neither aimed at a close and literal rendering of nature, like the Æginetan; nor at a severe and puristic treatment of form, like the Peloponnesian; nor at an ideal reached by the elimination of all baser particles from the pure gold obtained by virtue of selection, like the Attic. In judging these marbles, we must also remember the peculiar conditions under which they were probably worked out, — namely, by inferior workmen, from sketches more or less hastily made, — and also take into consideration the added effect which was given to them by color.

This is no matter of conjecture, as Dr. Georg Treu shows in the following passage, written at Athens in June last: — “That the temple sculptures once blazed with color, we have hitherto been able to conclude only from the way in which certain parts, such as the hair and beard, appeared unfinished, from want of detail, which was supplied by color. At last, however, we have had the good fortune to discover a great piece of drapery under the fallen drum of a column, the front part of which is covered with a lively, perfectly preserved, darkish-red hue. Further researches showed us clearly how it had happened that the color had adhered only to this piece of stone. It belonged without question to the chlamys of the central figure of the western gable (the Apollo), and was perfectly protected from the weather by the outstretched arm and the advanced thigh of the figure. The red mantle of this colossal image will remain for the future an assured fact in the field of ancient polychromatic decoration.” In considering Egyptian temples we are accustomed to accept color as a powerful factor in effect, but in those of the Greeks we are loath to do so. Their pale ruins, whose only tones are those which they have received from the sun's rays, seem to contradict the fact; and if here and there a fragment of marble shows some faint stain of red or blue, we reluctantly admit its evidence in favor of a system which is foreign to our modern notions of propriety. Such a discovery as this at Olympia is, then, a matter of importance, and especially valuable as going to prove that polychromy constituted a most important part of its effect. Now that we know that the gable statues were bright with color, we can more readily believe that it lent its charm to every architectural detail; as, for instance, that the mutules were red on the outer side, and blue on the under, like the guttæ and the triglyphs, and that the marble cyma and the anthemions were of a brownish red. Color, in short, met the eye everywhere, from the image of ivory and gold, with its dyed patterns, within the temple, to the Victory over the gable of the pronaos. Its disappearance from the surface of the gable statues makes them appear unfinished, and this, together with their forced proximity to the eye, renders it impossible for us to judge what their effect was when they were painted in harmony with their surroundings, and raised to a great height in the air. On the other hand, it must be confessed that the feeling of their dependence upon color and distance for effect, which comes over us as we look at them in their actual condition, proves their plastic inferiority to the pediment statues of the Parthenon, which, although seen under equally disadvantageous circumstances, suggest no such want to the mind.

Fortunately for Paionios as well as for ourselves, the really beautiful statue of Nike (Fig. 1), his last and greatest work at Olympia, has survived to vindicate his claim to a higher place among Greek sculptors than he would have appeared entitled to had the modern world been obliged to judge him only by the marbles of which we have been speaking. The statue bore the following inscription upon its triangular base: “The Messenians and the Naupaktians have consecrated this image to Zeus, as a tithe of the booty taken from the enemy. Paionios of Mende made it, and gained the prize for the akroteria placed upon the temple.”<sup>2</sup> The roof

<sup>1</sup> *Archäologische Zeitung*, 2tes und 3tes Heft: *Berichte aus Olympia*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias (V. 26) is not altogether in accord with the inscription in stating his belief that the booty referred to was taken from the Achæanians, B. C. 429. The Messenians themselves, he adds, say that they gave the statue jointly with the Athenians, in memory of the affair of Sphacteria, B. C. 455, and that they did not mention the name of their enemies, the Lacedæmonians, because they feared them. In commenting upon the discrepancy M. Rayet (*Gazette des Beaux Arts*, February, 1877) says that the establish-

ornaments (akroteria) here referred to, were the gilded bronze Victory and the two vases of the same material on the apex and the lower angles of the pediment, which, as is evident by the tenor of the inscription, were made by Paionios before the Nike. It stood in front of the temple façade, on the summit of a three-sided shaft which diminished upwards from its base. This shaft, formed of ten blocks of marble resting on an oblong slab of the same, was not a column, which no Greek would have used for any but its legitimate architectural purpose, but an elongated pedestal, raised upon which the Nike with its wings of gilded bronze must have produced an admirable effect. Its superiority as a work of art to any of the marbles of the eastern gable

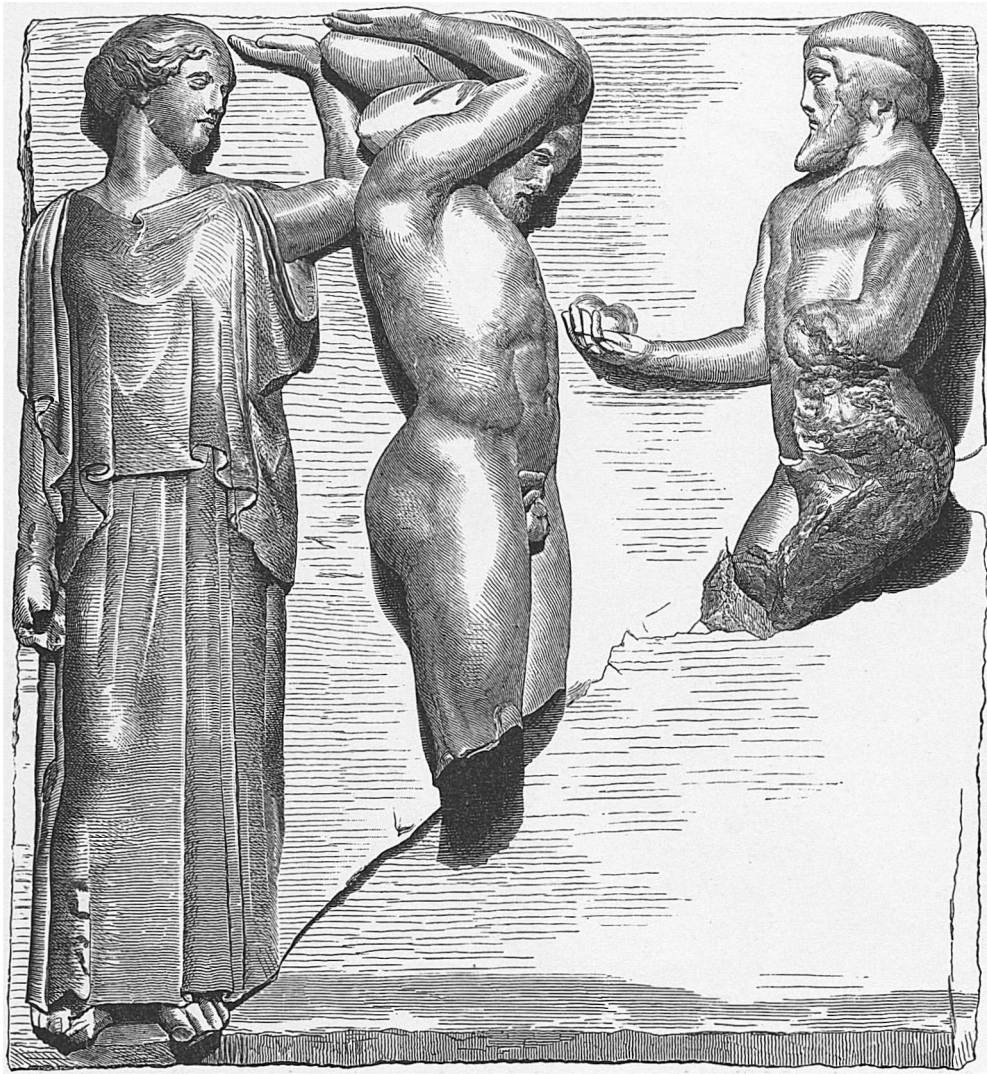


Fig. 2.

makes it difficult to believe that they are by the same artist; but on a closer examination we see that, though Paionios rises to a far higher level in the Nike, he is still true to the northern school in which he was bred. He shows his fidelity to its realism in the rotundity of the stomach and the breadth of the thighs, defects of nature "which Attic taste," as M. Rayet justly remarks, "would have attenuated"; as also by a want of clear derivation of the folds of the drapery from the shape and action of the limbs, by occasional hardness of line, and imper-

ment at Naupaktos of the emigrants from Messene who joined in the fight took place in 425, and adds, "Whether we adopt the version of Pausanias or that of the Messenians, the possible error in the date of the Nike is only five or six years." Late advices from Olympia announce the discovery of the head of the Nike. The face is broken away, like that of the Artemisia found at Halikarnassos, but otherwise the head is reported to be well preserved. As the left leg and right foot of the figure had previously been discovered, an almost complete restoration is now made possible.



fect execution, but above all by the pictorial nature of his subject. A figure which would fall if not sustained by wings is non-plastic, and as applied to the image of Victory is of northern origin. It was first used by the painter Aglaophon of Thasos, the father of Polygnotos, by whom, if Dr. Brunn is right in his conjectures, that pictorial element of art was brought to Athens which is unknown to the old Attic and Peloponnesian schools. The Athenian Nike was wingless, as it was said, that Victory might never fly away from Athens; but this poetical reason was perhaps the more readily admitted in sculpture because wings, when used as Paionios used them, to give apparent support to a marble figure thrown completely out of the perpendicular, are not admissible in sculpture. The Victory of Brescia has wings, but, as she stands intent upon her work, they are simply suggestive of her possibilities of flight. So also the lovely Victories of the



Fig. 3.

balustrade of the temple of Nike Apteros at Athens have wings, but use them not. To see flying Victories in marble we must go to Rome, and even there we shall only find them in reliefs, or, if in the round, of small proportions. When German critics say of the Olympian Nike, "She shoots through the air like a bird,"—"the laws of matter do not seem to apply to her,"—"she actually flies,"—they make us feel how essentially pictorial she is, and this is what sculpture never can be without ceasing to be what sculpture ought to be, namely, plastic. That it can be so even when applied to the treatment of this same subject, we have proof in the Nike of Samothrace at the Louvre, a headless and wingless figure, which, despite its colossal proportions, seems to rise like smoke into the air without external aid. One long unbroken line sweeps from the breast to the feet in a continuous curve, like that of a half-bent bow, driving the figure upwards with an impulse which needs no help from wings. To lift marble from the earth in this way, namely, by permeating the block with the spirit of motion conveyed to the eye by

means of lines of form and drapery, is truly sculptural and legitimate; but to put wings upon the shoulders and launch the figure from its pedestal is as truly pictorial and illegitimate. Although on these grounds the Nike of Paionios may be criticised, it must be admired as a bold and original creation, unequalled in lightness and grace, and in all respects save one a master work.

To complete our survey of the plastic decorations of the temple of Zeus, we must consider the so-called metopes, which, contrary to general usage, were placed at the ends of the building beneath the colonnade, on either side of the doorways leading into the cella and the opisthodomos. They represent the twelve labors of Herakles, and are summarily catalogued by Pausanias<sup>1</sup> without mention of the artists who sculptured them. The four which represent the victories of Herakles over the Cretan Bull (Fig. 3), the Nemean Lion (Fig. 4), and the triple-bodied Geryones, as well as the seated figure of the Stymphalian Artemis, were discovered by the French explorers at Olympia in 1829, and sent to Paris, where they have long decorated one of the sculpture galleries of the Louvre. Fragments of seven other metopes have been found at Olympia by the German explorers, of which one, that relating to Atlas and the apples of the Hesperides (Fig. 2), is almost entire. It is evident at the most cursory glance that these metopes were designed by artists of different schools, and probably put into marble by Elian workmen.

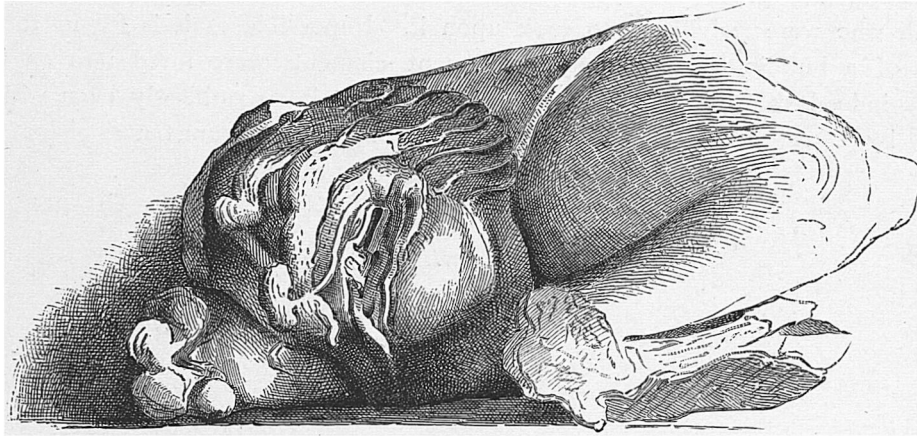


Fig. 4.

The system of treating bodily forms and draperies by masses, with as few details as possible, and the depending upon color and distance to give a finished effect to surface, is indeed identical in all, but their style and spirit vary, indicating the agency of artists bred in different schools. Thus the Atlas metope, straight-lined and rigidly draped, carefully modelled, with attention to the leading details of form, appears to be a work of the Peloponnesian school by an artist thoroughly acquainted with organic structure; the Stymphalian Artemis is northern Greek, i. e. pictorial like the work of Paionios, strikingly simple, and somewhat heavy and awkwardly posed; lastly, the group of Herakles and the Cretan Bull is Attic,—not old Attic or Pheidian, but Attic as we know it in the western pediment figures by Alkamenes, i. e. dramatic, vigorous, full of life and action. Throwing his body backwards, Herakles seizes the bull by the horns, and turns his neck round to the shoulder with overpowering force. Vigorously conceived and grandly composed, this fragment deserves to be ranked as one of the master-pieces of Greek dramatic sculpture.

It forms the strongest contrast with the lately discovered metope shown in Fig. 2. The three figures in the composition are those of Atlas, a Hesperide, and Herakles, who stands between them, with a cushion between his shoulders and his arms raised above his bowed head to support the weight of the heavens which he has temporarily undertaken to bear. In this task he is assisted by the Hesperide, who stands behind him draped in a Dorian peplos, whose folds

<sup>1</sup> Lib. V. ch. 10.

reach to her feet in straight, falling lines of archaic simplicity. Meanwhile, Atlas standing before the demigod offers him a handful of those golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides which Gaia gave to Hera when she took Zeus to be her husband. The style of this metope, says Dr. Brunn, "is unquestionably in absolutely diametrical opposition to that of the pediment statues. It is a master work of Peloponnesian sculpture, the finest which we possess of the time of Polyklete. Nowhere is there vagueness or want of precision, but everywhere clearness, certainty, firmness, in the strictest, strongest language of genuine sculpture."

The same variety of treatment which is observable in the more important plastic decorations of the temple, such as the gable sculptures and the metopes, is recognizable in the lesser ornamental details, such as the lions' heads which served as water-spouts along the edge of the roof, showing a haste to complete the building which could only be satisfied by co-operative labor. While Pheidias and his assistants were at work upon the colossal Zeus in their workshop, Paionios, Alkamenes, and perhaps other masters of whose names we are ignorant, had numbers of native sculptors occupied in putting their designs and sketches into marble. These, when finished, were raised to their destined places, and colored in harmony with each other and their surroundings.

The day at last came when the splendid edifice, glittering with gold, and resplendent with color, stood amid the groves of the Altis beneath the blue canopy of heaven, a wonder and delight to all who were privileged to look upon it. Impossible as it is for us to conceive the magnificence of a building whose many component elements were fused into an incomparable unit, we may indeed regret that time and man have dealt so ruthlessly even with those parts of it which, by strength of material, might under happier circumstances have been spared to us.

CHARLES C. PERKINS.

*(To be continued.)*

